181 share of upheavals and yet no one has ever evaluated scientifically the total impact of the complex social, political and economic changes of the last 100 years upon the Hungarians.

178 The material factors of civilization have obviously changed within this period and continue to change in front of our eyes. Even a partial industrialization was a relatively late phenomenon in Hungary. The country was the granary of the Austro-Hungarian Empire for centuries, and not before the second half of the nineteenth century can we consider industry in Hungary in the modern sense. After World War I, dismembered Hungary fell back on an almost entirely agricultural economy. Public efforts to adapt the country's economy to the changed geographic conditions were undertaken, aiming at the establishment of new types of industry corresponding to the new conditions. Mechanization of agriculture was still in a rudimentary state. After World War II, the official economic emphasis in the country fell upon the development of heavy industry and the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture, [369] as taught by Lenin and Stalin. Meanwhile, technological progress has not only attracted peasants to the cities but, with the new media of mass communication, it brought forth the village from its secular isolation and began to spread elements of urban culture among the peasants. During the same period, the boundaries of the state, overlooking minor readjustments of the

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Left of the Danube		Right of the Danube	
Szeged	80,000	Győr	50,000
Debrecen	55,000	Pécs	43,600
Hódmezővásárhely	36,900	Szombathely	34,200
Kecskemét	35,500	Pozsony	32,500
Békéscsaba	31,300	Székesfehérvár	32,200
Makó	30,000	Nagykanizsa	29,500
Szolnok	27,900	Kaposvár	27,800

361 This table clearly shows that, numerically, the distribution of cities in the Great Plains and Transdanubia is about equal. But one should not forget either that the appearance of the cities on the two sides of the Danube are basically different. The Alföld towns, whatever their size, look like huge villages: the buildings--with the exception of a few public buildings in the middle of the city--are one-story constructions similar to the houses in the small villages; the streets are badly paved or perhaps not at all. On the other hand, the cities of Transdanubia are completely city-like.

369. The post-war years in Hungary have seen a continuation of the urbanization trend which has been in existence since the early time of industrialization. The emphasis of the Soviet Union on industrialization is well known. The goal of the Five Year Plan from 1949 to 1954 to reduce the percentage of the agricultural population from 52.7 per cent to 44 per cent was most likely achieved. These formerly rural people have probably been absorbed in industry and the state administrative offices. The same trend will certainly exist as long as the regime continues this policy.

receive slices of bread covered with jam, lard or honey. 000

The technical aspect of preparing and serving food varies greatly between the city population, where the equipment is mass-produced, and some isolated rural areas, where primitive cutlery and utensils have not yet disappeared. 252 369

Since the canned goods industry produces largely for exportation, the preservation of food is done in individual homes, even in the large cities. For this purpose, several techniques are current: bottling by sterilization, pickling, salting, drying and smoking, clamping and other types of pit-storage. Rural communities located near water have ice-pits. 251

Among the alcoholic beverages, wine, of which world-famous brands are produced in Hungary, is the most important. Home distilled brandies are made of apricots, prunes, plums, pears, lees of wine, marc, etc. Beer drinking, along with the use of coffee or tea, is rather limited to urban areas. 273 [272]

Smoking is a widespread habit. The rural population generally prefers the pipe (few of them chew tobacco), but smoking of cigarettes is now spreading from the cities. The typical Hungarian pipe is long-stemmed (about two spans) with a bowl made out of wood or clay. 276

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369 In the cities, meals are served in the dining room or, more rarely, in the kitchen. In rural areas, the rooms of the houses are used for this purpose only on special occasions, such as Christmas or a wedding; otherwise, meals are eaten on the porch or in the yard. In the cities the three main meals are at 7:00 A.M., 2:00 P.M. and 8:00 P.M., the afternoon meal being the most important. Farmers eat, depending upon the season, three or more times, at 5:00 A.M., 12:00 noon and 7:00 P.M. Their main meal is taken in the evening.

[188] Among the numerous ancient customs connected with meal time, some still appear to be generally alive: the grace before and after the meal, the cutting of the homemade loaf of bread by the master of [562] the house, the silence observed around the table. In the Palóc region even today only the men sit at the table, while the women eat standing, unless they are nursing an infant.

146 Nutritional status. As for the nutritional status of the Magyar peasants, very little precise data are available, and there are practically none on food consumption. Relying on reports from refugees and evaluating articles published by the Hungarian daily press, one could roughly estimate the nutritional status of the

peasants as varying between poor and fair, according to Magyar standards, from region to region, and poor compared to an American farmer's standards. However, the Magyar peasants are still better nourished than their fellow countrymen living in the cities, exclusive of the aristocrats of the Communist bureaucracy. A definite lack in their diet, however, is that of milk (even in the case of children), green vegetables and fruits. This is due partly to financial reasons, partly to dietary habits. 146 [369].

Public health regulation. Hungary was one of the first states in Europe to provide its people with modern public health legislation. Law No. 16 of 1876 entrusted the local administration in the merye with the job of decreasing the death rate and the regulation of hygienic conditions. This same law provided for reclaiming of swamp lands, regulated hygienic conditions and first aid provisions in the work shops, established ambulance centers, and set the standards for midwives. Rural hygiene was greatly improved in 1927 when the Royal Hungarian National Institute for Public Health was founded, chiefly from a grant of the Rockefeller Foundation. 744

In the pre-war years, two organizations, both under government

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[369]

Medical personnel. Before the Second World War, a communal or cantonal doctor was treating, on the average, 4,500 patients. The percentage of trained physicians was much higher in the cities (three doctors for every 1,000 people), especially in Budapest. This situation has improved little if any since the war. There is also a shortage of trained nurses. Government decrees require communities to employ one licensed midwife for every 800 inhabitants.

The instruction of ~~medical~~ doctors is very good in Hungary. The law of 1938, still enforced, requires health officers in the country to take refresher courses in general medical practice.

[554]

In the villages the local doctor and pharmacist belong to the rural intelligentsia and are highly respected people. However, peasants often hesitate to go to the doctor in many cases of less serious illness, and they use instead popular remedies, such as herbs, potions, compresses, poultices, and the like or else, in scattered areas, rely on outright superstition for healing.

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Sanitation. One of the greatest health problems in the Hungarian villages is that of drinking water. Piped systems are practically non-existent. In many regions, only 100-200 meter wells could

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342 City buildings are, of course, varied in style, structure and
369 material and bear the general aspect of any urban settlement. - -

In city homes, individual rooms serve different purposes: they are living rooms, dining rooms, bedrooms, etc. This differentiation is, however, completely absent in the peasant home, despite the ever-increasing number of rooms into which they may be divided.

Nowadays, when there is a second or even a third living room in most of the country houses, the main living room is actually used very little; it is preserved primarily for receiving guests of importance
352 or for feasting on certain family occasions. The pride of the main living room is the decorated bed (menyezeteságy, tornyosnyoszolya) which serves as a purely decorative item, being piled, in some cases to the ceiling, with eider-down quilts and pillows. Chairs are lined
354 up in front of this bed. In many homes, a furnace is built in a corner near the entrance to the room. It is a cumbrous convenience made of clay in different sizes and shapes, and whitewashed or inlaid with pottery. The most elaborate ones may be found displayed in the Trans-danubian homes. These come equipped with built-in chimney corner seats
352 (padka) long enough to sleep one person. In the corner opposite the furnace is a heavy table, with two benches along the walls. In the homes of well-to-do peasants, the table moves to the middle of the

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Szedres	--	Sztalinváros
Inota	--	Sztalinváros
Sztalinváros	--	Kecskemét
Angyalföld	--	Vác
Kesztnyéten	--	Debrecen

There were 1,391,000 individual users of electricity in 1953. Assuming an average of four persons per household, this means less than 60 per cent of the total population. The families without electricity are, of course, in the rural areas, and less than half of the Magyar peasant homes are provided with electric power.

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The Five Year Plan anticipated that by 1954 all Hungarian communities would be connected with a power line, whereas, in pre-war years, only 25.7 per cent of the towns had electricity. However, electrification was accomplished in only 75 per cent of the country's settlements by the 1954 deadline. Electrification of a village does not mean electricity for all or even a majority of the homes of the village. Rural electrification by the Communists is directed toward the increase of productivity rather than comfort and convenience; priority in a village is always given to the large collective farming units which use power tools.

The actual living standard, although considerably lower than

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It is clear that Hungary cannot emerge from the catastrophe of the present war without radical alterations of its country life.

THE MOVEMENT FOR AGRARIAN REFORM. There have, indeed, already been considerable changes in the last few years. Not only has the Government begun to take more interest in the villagers and farm labourers, but all Hungarian society has woken up to the fact that there was here a very neglected and miserable class, making up one-third of the whole population of the country. A group of young men went round the villages and described conditions, just as Charles Kingsley did for England a century ago, in a way which made everyone uneasy. The peasants and labourers themselves began to organize and to get into touch with other classes, particularly the socialists in the towns, and before March 1944, when the German occupation set everything back again, a strong political movement was growing up for land distribution, better conditions of work and more political freedom generally. The leaders of this movement were imprisoned by the Germans and their puppets; but, as soon as the latter were driven out, it was certain that the whole movement would spring up again and that no one would be able to stop it. In fact, the peasant leaders were prominent among the men who, as described below, set up a new government at Debreczen at Christmas 1944.

THE LIFE OF THE VILLAGE. Meanwhile, life in a Hungarian village is quiet enough. Where there is a 'big house', it is the centre of things, even for

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those villagers who are not the tenants or dependents of the landlord. Outside the 'big house' probably only the priest's and the schoolmaster's houses stand out a little from the rest. Even a big village may have no shop; the villagers buy what they need on their weekly visit to the local market town. There is, probably, an inn, but it is not much frequented, since each family makes its own wine. By day, during most of the year, the street is almost deserted; all the men are out in the fields, perhaps miles away. They come home in the evening, when the animals also are driven in, and for half an hour the whole place wakes up. Later, men and women sit on benches outside their doors, or in the street, under the acacias, smoking and talking. On Sunday they sit there all day, except when they are in the church.

It is a hard, monotonous life. It is monotonous even for the inhabitants of the 'big house', who are usually much poorer than they let anyone guess and often spend their lives with no bigger distraction than a little shooting or a drive over the bumpy mud roads to visit a neighbour, who is most likely also a cousin or a brother-in-law, five miles away. For the peasants, a wedding, a religious procession or a harvest festival are the great events of the year. A hard life, but not without its own charm. Few people know the Hungarian countryside. But if they do penetrate there, they will be received by landlord or by peasant, with much kindness and hospitality, and with the perfect courtesy and unfailing dignity which is equally the mark of the Hungarian gentleman and of the most ragged, barefooted Hungarian peasant.

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2. *Urban Life*

349 THE TOWNS. While the life of the village or the farm is still the most characteristic form of Hungarian life, it is no longer, as it was up to a century ago, almost the only one. As has been said, 40 % of the population lives to-day in towns. It is true that many of the places which figure in the statistics as 'towns' with quite large populations, including Szeged and Debreczen, which rank respectively as the second and third cities of Hungary, are of the type described in chapter II, and except for a few streets in the centre of each, they are really only enormous villages; nearly the whole of their population consists of peasants. Many of the other towns are no more than small, sleepy country markets. The only place which could claim to rank as a great European city was still Budapest, which was developed in the nineteenth century as the capital of a country which then counted twenty million inhabitants. Even after the reduction in Hungary's size and population under the Treaty of Trianon, it kept and even increased its lead, since the smaller country needed no provincial capitals. It was the seat of the Government and of the entire central administration and the only important business centre in Hungary. With its satellite towns east and south of Pest, which brought the population of Great Budapest up to 1,300,000, it was also by far the most important factory town. The outskirts of Pest were, indeed, the only spot in Hungary which bore any resemblance to a big Western industrial town. Some of the provincial towns, such as Györ, Pécs, Miskolcz, have industries

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of some importance; but there is nothing in Hungary approaching a continuous industrialized belt or a 'Black Country'.

The Hungarian towns outside Budapest have not much to them. A few of them, particularly in West Hungary, have some nice old buildings, dating from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Most of these towns were founded by German immigrants, and the population of them still spoke German until recent years. But in the main the Hungarian provincial town is a small, sleepy, rather slatternly place, which is still very much a part of the surrounding country. In the very centre there will be a few public buildings, a church or two, perhaps a hotel and may be a modern block of business offices. But in the side streets all the houses are one-storied, many of them standing in little gardens. The real centre of every town is its great market-place, in which, most mornings of the week, peasant women squat on the ground, surrounded by piles of fruit and vegetables or geese and poultry with their legs tied together. Once a week there is a larger market, to which the peasants come in from the whole countryside, distances of ten, fifteen or twenty miles. Then the whole square is packed with them, and with the little stalls on which the shopkeepers spread out the cheap goods, cloths, haberdashery or household implements, which they sell to the peasants. The real business of the week is done on market-day in the market; the peasant rarely enters a shop.

THE CAPITAL. Budapest was, so far as Hungary is

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369 concerned, a world by itself. Although the country priests railed at its vices, nearly the whole nation was intensely proud of it, and its visitor is certain to be deluged with descriptions of its past beauties, mingled with lamentations over the dreadful sufferings inflicted on it as the tide of war has swept
361 over it. Something has already been said of its
369 beautiful situation on the two banks of the Danube: Buda, with its royal palace, its cathedral and its public buildings, stands on the high hill overlooking its western bank with wooded hills covered with villas and gardens, behind; Pest, sprawls out on the eastern bank, with vast suburbs running out onto the dusty Alföld. Half a dozen bridges linked the two, the most famous being the celebrated Suspension Bridge, built a century ago by the Scot, Adam Clark. The next above it, the Margaret Bridge, blown up in the autumn of 1944, gave access to the famous Margaret Island, the playground of the well-to-do of Budapest, with hotels, cafés, swimming baths, gardens and tennis and polo grounds.

Pest is the modern city, in which those who wanted it could find everything which a big modern town has to offer: shops, and restaurants, cafés and night-clubs, and also very excellent museums, picture galleries and libraries. Buda is much smaller and was quieter, but contained a multitude of small inns and restaurants with pleasant gardens, which were the favourite resorts of the people of Budapest.

369 The average Hungarian of the city took a great
517 many of his meals in restaurants, and was fond of spending long evenings, especially in the summer, where it was possible to sit in the garden or court-

9: Eppstein S-4 (no date) 1945 EC1 Hungary EC1

yard, drinking a little wine, talking and listening to the gypsy orchestra. Both food and wine were cheap (and you were not expected to drink much); time was not expensive, and a small tip to the leader of the orchestra would bring bows and compliments as though you were a duke at least, and a selection of tunes played at your table, right into your ear. For other times of the day, particularly after the mid-day meal, which in Hungary is the principal meal, there were the cafés, where, again, you might spend all the time you had to spare at no more expense than the price of a cup of coffee. All cafés kept the newspapers, and the waiter would bring you any that you wanted. The big Budapest cafés, and the main cafés in the larger provincial towns, had foreign newspapers, including English, as well as Hungarian.

THE JEWS. Until a year or two ago, almost all the shopkeepers in Hungary were Jews. The true Hungarian, the Magyar of the upper and middle classes, despised business as a career not fitting for a gentleman. If, therefore, he could not live as a landowner, he entered the public service as a civil servant or officer or schoolmaster, or perhaps went into the Church. Even the poor man who saved a little money and wanted to better his son did not try to set him up in business, but got him a job in the police, or the railways, or in some small government office. Thus the middle classes of Hungary consisted of two worlds, living side by side and mixing very little: the Magyars in the government services the Jews in business, finance and most of the professions.

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Hungary ECI

that Moscow should attempt with every possible means to extend its sphere of influence westward. The true source of the debacle was the collective stupidity which all of us who should have been conscious heritors of Western civilization manifested in an hour of desperate crisis, and for which we do not even yet feel responsible. Our failure was rooted in prejudices and conventions, in outmoded though often reasonable assumptions, in shibboleths expounded wherever an audience could be assembled to listen, and, over and above all these, in the cultural history of the Western World.

Moderately liberal Americans often thought of Hungary as "an outpost of reaction." No doubt they were right from many points of view. The Hungarian people, one of the most gifted of Europe and also one of the most civilized, was in large part so galvanized by its role in history that it could not decide as to what it desired to be in the modern time. The soil of the country was very fertile, nurturing a sturdy and tenacious peasantry; but despite sporadic essays in land reform a landowning aristocracy, often devoid of interest in anything save the revenues upon which its standard of living depended, continued to maintain a swarm of virtual serfs who lived on meat fat and onions. The failure to solve any major problem incident to industrialization caused many Hungarian workers after 1918 to move politically far to the Left, while the wily Regent for a monarchy that no one was willing or able to establish waited for something to happen which would restore to the nation territories deemed to have been taken away unjustly by the Treaty of the Trianon. As a result Hungary, despite the ability of its citizenry and all the advances secured by determined advocates of social reform, remained to a striking extent a feudal country and therefore an absurd anachronism. Yet it was by no means alone at fault. Hungary suffered from the fact that the dissolution of the Austro-